



# Pupils learn about our planet's eco-system

**Above: pupils from Newport C of E Primary plant flowers in portable tubs; right: others make paper 'concertina bees'**

CARING for our planet was the theme of our annual services for those leaving C of E schools within our diocese.

Children planted bee-friendly plants in their school grounds, learnt about stewardship of God's world, and painted canvases to remind them of the importance of the honey bee – as they prepared for their Leavers' Services this year.

Then more than 3,500 pupils from 35 different church schools in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight gathered at Portsmouth and Winchester Cathedrals for workshops and special services to remind them of the importance of conservation. 'Bee inspired' was the theme as the pupils focussed on the importance of the honey bee and pollination, as part of a wider focus on caring for God's planet.

Our cathedral hosted workshops and services on three consecutive days in July. Volunteers helped the Year 6 pupils to plant some of their bee-friendly flowers in portable wooden crates, make 'seed bombs' that will grow into plants, create concertina bees out of paper, and

sing about God's creation. Some of the 11-year-olds also made 'well dressings', using beans and seeds to create artwork that celebrated God's Earth.

Then those Year 6 pupils joined together for Leavers' Services led by bishops, archdeacons and cathedral staff, that would celebrate their years of learning within a C of E school and commission them ahead of their move to secondary school in September.

Some pupils gave presentations about the work they had done in their schools to promote conservation of the planet, in line with this year's theme. Each school brought with them some of the bee-friendly plants they had grown, and their 'Bee Creative' painted canvas celebrating bees.

And they learnt something about the importance of bees within the eco-system created by God – and why learning to conserve bees would teach them more about



how to save other species. Pupils and staff were also given special candles featuring our diocesan logo, to light during school assemblies to remind them of their identity as C of E schools.

It was the first year that pupils from Cornerstone C of E Primary School in Whiteley had been able to attend the annual service – this year's Year 6 cohort was the school's first ever set of 10 and 11-year-olds since the school was created seven years ago.

Headteacher Tim Clarke said: "The messages through the service enabled children and staff to have space and time to reflect on the importance of this time of their lives; to be proud of their achievements and successes and to look forward with hope, confidence and excitement for the future."